

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03420 142326Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----142329Z 080609 /73

P 142153Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1002

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 3420

STADIS////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN FROM CHARGE

E.O. &11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, CO

SUBJECT: US SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN LATIN AMERICA

REF: STATE 083680

1. YOUR CABLE MENTIONS THAT, IN TERMS OF CONGRESSIONAL

ATTITUDES, "ALMOST NO COUNTRY PROGRAM IN LATIN AMERICA LOOKS
SECURE." I TRUST THAT THE COLOMBIAN PROGRAM HELPS ACCOUNT
FOR THE "ALMOST".

2. AS YOU KNOW, AND AS I HOPE THE CONGRESS KNOWS, COLOMBIA
HAS AN EXCELLENT HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IN ADDITION TO BEING A
FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY. FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE HERE, WE DO NOT
PERCEIVE ANY BILATERAL PROBLEMS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR FY 77 AND FY 78. COLOMBIA HAS BEEN
OFFERED A \$26 MILLION FMS CREDIT FOR FY 77 WHICH IT HAS ACCEPT-
ED IN PRINCIPLE. WE ARE AWAITING COMPLETION OF GOC STAFF WORK
PROGRAMMING THE USE OF THIS CREDIT. WE HAVE ALSO NOTIFIED GOC OF
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A POSSIBLE FY 78 FMS CREDIT OF \$29 MILLION. WE HAVE HAD NO
REACTION FROM THEM ON THIS YET BUT IF GOC CHOSSES NOT TO UTILIZE
IT FULLY THIS WOULD ONLY BE BECAUSE OF BEDGETARY, NOT POLITICAL,
CONSIDERATIONS. IMET FUNDS OF \$700,000 HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE
FOR FY 77. GOC WILL USE ALL OF THIS AND WANTS MORE. IMET FUNDS
FOR FY 78 ARE \$1 MILLION, AND WE EXPECT GOC WILL UTILIZE THIS
FULLY. WE ALSO EXPECT GOC TO CONTINUE THROUGH THESE YEARS ITS

MODEST PROGRAM OF FMS CASH PURCHASES.

3. IN YOUR MARCH 22 TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, YOU EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE USG SHOULD SHOW A CLEAR PREFERENCE FOR THOSE WHO PRACTICE HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY. LATER, ON APRIL 15, MS DERIAN, THE DEPT'S COORDINATOR

FOR HUMAN RIGHTS SIMILARLY TOLD A HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE THAT SHE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE USG PLACE STRONGER EMPHASIS ON POSITIVE ACTIONS AS A PREFERABLE WAY TO INCREASE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS RATHER THAN ON AID CUTS, DENUNCIATIONS, ETC. MY COLLEAGUES AND I HERE IN BOGOTA STRONGLY SHARE THOSE SENTIMENTS AND FEEL THAT THERE IS HARDLY A BETTER PLACE IN LATIN AMERICA THAN COLOMBIA FOR IMPLEMENTING SUCH AN APPROACH. AND WITHIN COLOMBIA, THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE SPHERE OFFERS A PARTICULARLY GOOD AND APPROPRIATE AVENUE BECAUSE THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY'S CONTINUED RESPECT FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES AND FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IS THE DETERMINANT OF COLOMBIA'S PRESENT, AND UNFORTUNATELY RARE, POLITICAL SITUATION. FOR THIS REASON, IN ADDITION TO THOSE WE HAVE SET FORTH IN NUMEROUS EARLIER MESSAGES CONCERNING MILGP STAFFING, WE FEEL THAT SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMING IN COLOMBIA SHOULD NOT BE CURTAILED AND SHOULD BE KEPT AS FLEXIBLE AS POSSIBLE (E.G. BY PERMITTING USE OF CREDITS FOR SPARE PARTS.) IN THIS CONNECTION, WE HOPE THAT THE CONGRESS WILL ALSO BEAR IN MIND THAT ANY WEAPONS THAT THE GOC CONTEMPLATES BUYING UNDER THESE CREDITS WILL BE DEFENSIVE WEAPONS.

4. WE ALSO CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT FORCED, DRASTIC CUTS IN MILGP STAFFING SHOULD BE AVOIDED. IF THIS CANNOT BE DONE, AND IF FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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EXAMPLE COLOMBIA FINDS THAT THE US MILGP PRESENCE IS CUT DOWN TO THE SAME LEVEL AS IN THOSE COUNTRIES WHERE THE MILITARY HAVE OVERTHROWN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS AND SUPPRESSED HUMAN RIGHTS, IT WILL BE HARD TO CONVINCE THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY THAT STATEMENTS SUCH AS THOSE WHICH YOU AND MS DERIAN HAVE MADE ARE MEANINGFUL.

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